Ian Baucom, Higher Education Leader, Enterprising Administrator, and Prolific Scholar, Named President of Middlebury.

Middlebury College

# Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies

## GSFS Statement on Executive Orders and the Rights of Trans and Non-binary Members of our Community

Middlebury's Political Science Department will be hosting an upcoming forum titled: "What is the right approach on public policy and transgender medicine?" We would like to take this moment to reaffirm the Program in Gender, Sexuality & Feminist Studies commitment to our core values of academic inquiry and community.

1. All medical decisions should be made between the person seeking medical help and medical professionals. The benefits of gender-affirming care are well-documented and substantiated and have been endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association, the American Nurses Association, and many other medical associations. A person's access to medical care is not up for debate in a society that respects the rights of

minoritized groups. Engaging in such debate serves to mislead the public in order to further dehumanize those groups and their needs. No politicians or ideologues should be part of that decision-making process, whether it is about reproductive or gender-affirming care.

2. Donald Trump's executive order on "Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism…" denies the existence of trans, non-binary and intersex persons by declaring there is only sex, male or female, and it is only binary. The order says:

*It is the policy of the United States to recognize two sexes, male and female. These sexes are not changeable and are grounded in fundamental and incontrovertible reality.*

This goes against foundational biological knowledge, which clearly demonstrates the regular occurrence of intersex conditions, as well as against the historical and anthropological record, which indicates that the sex/gender system has always been and always will be far more complex than a strict binary.

More concerning, such a statement denies the existence of people who are a gender other than the one assigned at birth. In other words, it says there are no trans or non-binary people.

We are extremely concerned about any political rhetoric that imagines any minoritized group disappeared. There are good historical and contemporary reasons to be concerned that such rhetoric leads to real world violence.

3. We support the rights of trans and non-binary people, despite an anti-gender movement in the US and globally that would strip them of their rights. Because of Trump's executive order, trans women in federal prisons can and are already being moved to men's facilities, trans and non-binary persons can and are already being denied passports with their gender on them, those US citizens with an X on their passport cannot have those passports renewed, and gender-affirming care is being denied to people under 19 even in states where it is still legal.

In the face of this rights-stripping process, we encourage everyone to find out more about why the Trump administration is using the spectre of "gender" and "gender ideology" to create an internal enemy that must be destroyed. There is a global far-right movement that uses gender to try and scare people. Far right politicians have described gender as a "nuclear bomb" and "destroying civilization." In fact, gender is a field of inquiry, one where questions are asked, evidence is weighed, and power is analyzed. It is not a place to debate the existence of minoritized groups. Instead, we should ask why it is possible to deny the existence of trans

and non-binary people at this time. We should examine under what conditions political movements can imagine whole groups removed or disappeared, and why institutions are capitulating to these extremist movements. We encourage you to find out more. Take a gender studies class, read a book like this, or even listen to a podcast. More than ever, we need a well-informed populace who respects Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies expertise, the lived experiences and embodied knowledge of trans and non-binary people, as well as the rights of minoritized groups.

Feminist studies is a dynamic interdisciplinary field that examines the social construction of gender and sexuality.

At Middlebury, gender, sexuality, and feminist studies (GSFS) courses utilize gender and sexuality as modes of inquiry and analysis, and we pay particular attention to the ways in which gendered ideologies are produced in relation to race, class, ability, and geography. Consistent across our courses is a focus on how power operates in the social world and informs our own place within it.

## Our Interdisciplinary Approach

Our curriculum examines the intersections of sexuality and gender in a variety of contexts. We have courses*(https://www.middlebury.edu/college/academics/gender-sexuality-feminist-studies/courses)* that draw upon the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences. By questioning common-sense understandings of gender and sexuality, our program highlights the possibilities for transformation and change.

*Middlebury students from around the world who grew up in war zones discuss the impact of conflict on everyday life as part of the Gensler Symposium on* Sex & War.

## About the Department

Students take introductory courses that investigate gender as a category deeply embedded in race, feminisms from a historical and global perspective, and queer critique. Part of our commitment to feminist

pedagogy*(https://www.middlebury.edu/college/academics/gender-sexuality-feminist-studies/learning-goals)* means that many of our courses encourage engaged research and translation of projects and papers into forms of “public feminisms.”

## Chellis House

Located in the Feminist Resource Center at Chellis House*(https://www.middlebury.edu/office/chellis-house)*, GSFS serves as a hub for feminist and queer inquiry and activism at Middlebury. Students have the opportunity to conduct research with GSFS faculty, work at the Feminist Resource Center, live in the Queer Studies House*(https://www.middlebury.edu/college/academics/gender-sexuality-feminist-studies/resources/queer-studies-house)*, and apply for funding for their own research and activist interests. Our majors go on to careers in a diverse range of fields, including medicine and health care, law, education, government, and arts and media.

*Chellis House workers: a force to be reckoned with.*

## Our Alumni

These are just some of the many interesting ways our graduates have applied their liberal arts learning to engage the world.

- Beyond the Green, *Cofounder and Developer*
- Seattle Arts & Lectures, *Business Manager*
- The Nielsen Company, *Recruiter*
- Adams County Social Services (Colorado), *Intake Caseworker/Child Protection*
- Western Oregon University, *Instruction Librarian*
- YMCA, *Program Coordinator*
- Judge Baker Children's Center, *Clinician*
- Food Network, *Digital Producer*
- Legal Solutions, *Team Lead, Hosting Litigation Technology Services*
- Bronx Defenders,*Civil Legal Advocate*

- Deutsche Bank, *Associate (Consultant*)
- NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene, *Evaluation Specialist*
- The Architects, *Founder/Dancer*
- South Shore Natural Science Center, *Executive Director*

- IDEXX Laboratories Inc., *Senior IT Business Analyst*
- Ketubah-Arts, *Founder and Owner*
- JSA Advisors, *COO*
- JCC Human Resources, *Director of Benefits*

## Meet the Faculty

Office Hours

## Explore the Program

Requirements

## Find Resources

Student Resources

Program in Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies

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Help shape Middlebury's future.

Make a Gift

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